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### NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVESTORY - NOMINATION FORM

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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (II known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Richmond View is located near the confluence of Kingsland Creek with the James River just south of Richmond in Chesterfield County. The house is a story-and-a-half framed structure, 18 by 31 feet, with a one-story frame ell stretching 55 feet to the rear (north). The earliest portion of the

house is set on English-bond brick piers which have been infilled to create a continuous underpinning. The whole building is now covered with asbestos siding, but earlier beaded weatherboards survive under it.

The original structure is three bays in length. The front and rear walls have large nine-over-nine sash with extremely wide muntins, and the east end wall has six-over-six sash dating from the early nineteenth century. There is a door in the center of the west gable end, but evidence indicates that it also had two windows at one time. The roof, the later porch, and the five pedimented dormers (three on the front and two on the rear) are all covered with sheet metal, and the whole is crowned by a central brick chimney which is set just behind the ridge.

The house plan is one rarely seen in Virginia. One enters through a vestibule located in front of the central chimney, with a single room to either side. A later central lean-to on the rear connects with the ell, containing two consecutive rooms with a chimney between.

In the west (left) room of the front portion is a very plain early-nine-teenth-century mantel which is composed of a wide architrave surround crowned by a mantel shelf. A chair rail is carried around the room. The east room has the same sort of mantel and chair rail, and there is a closed stair in the northwest (inside rear) corner. It formerly rose and turned ninety degrees to ascend from this room, but was straightened when the lean-to was added, and is now entered from that room. Under the stair is a closet with a small four-panel, raised-panel door; another small door adjacent to it in the chimney wall opens into the space behind the chimney.

In the west chamber of the half-story is a plain Greek mantel and a fine beaded, vertical-board closet door. There are many other surviving details, including doors, latches and hinges, throughout the original portion of the house.

Sometime after the first structure was built, a small, plain lean-to room was added. In it are preserved the beaded weatherboards of the former outside rear wall of the building. Around the middle of the numeteenth century, the one-story cll was added behind this. In the southern of its two rooms is a Creek Revival mantel. In the northern (rear) room, the ell's brick nogging can be observed.

One early outbuilding survives -- a large, square framed structure with a pyramidal roof. It may be a smokebouse, but the interior is inaccessible to examination.

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Richmond View was part of Kingsland, an early-seventeenth-century grant to Christopher Branche. Connected with the Tazewell family in the nineteenth century, it is significant primarily for its extremely rare center-chimney house, a type not ordinarily found in Virginia at so late a date.

Christopher Branche's grant of 1635 consisted of 250 acres. The property descended in the family, and beginning in the 1760s, Branch Tanner, a grandson of Thomas Tanner and Elizabeth Branch, began adding to the holding, eventually accumulating an estate of 1979 acres. Tanner died in 1794, but the property remained in his estate until 1805, when it was listed in the tax records as being owned by Dr. William Tazewell "in the right of his wife", Tanner's daughter Mary. It was probably early in their tenure that the distinctive house was built.

In 1823 the property was valued at \$29,000 for the Land, plus \$800 worth of improvements. Parcels of land were gradually sold, and by 1851, when Tazewell's widow sold the property, then called Richmond View, to Richard A. Willis, the holding had been reduced to 817 acres.

The house survives as one of the few known center-chimney dwelling houses of its period in the state. Although such houses are sometimes attributed to "Huguenot" cultural influences, it seems that, in this case at least, the house represents a survival of an earlier English prototype. As such, it is related to the center-chimney, single-pile New England house, though it is important to note that Richmond View is not in the pure New England form Certain features, particularly the placement of the stair in one of the two rooms rather than in the entrance vestibule, set it apart from northern examples, as do the general proportions of the house. What seems most likely is that the building is a vestigial example of a type of center-chimney dwelling which archaeological evidence suggests many have been prevalent in the first half of the seventeenth century in Virginia, one which was derived from the same southeastern English sources as the New England house. Since building types tend to pass down the social and functional scale, this earlier building type may have been the inspiration for the many centerchimney auxiliary buildings -- kitchens, laundries, slave quarters, and so forth--which were found in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Virginia. What is rare about Richmond View, then, is the use of the plan type, in a version probably close to its original for the principal dwelling of a large plantation. It is also worth noting that the plan of the cll is similar to that of the front portion, being three-bays long with an exterior door lead+ ing into the space beside the center chimney.

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